

REMARKS

The Examiner has allowed two claims, but has rejected Claims 1-8 as being unpatentable over Slesinski, et al. in view of Denton. The Examiner contends that, especially in Figs. 1 and 8, Slesinski shows a hub cap vent plug that is resistant to penetration by water under high pressure, wherein the plug includes an axially outer end face portion, etc. However, neither the Slesinski nor the Denton reference is considered by the Applicant to be pertinent to Claims 1-8, let alone Claims 9 and 10.

The Examiner contends that the plug 22 of Slesinski contains and outer end face portion and side wall portions adapted to mate in fluid tight relation with an opening in the associated hub cap 20. The Examiner cites additional similarities which are common to many hub caps. However, in the Slesinski reference, the valve cover 50 does not have an inner surface that is spaced closely apart from the end face portion of the plug. In fact, the plug overlies and is in a tangent or touching, water-tight relation to the plug. This water-tight relation continues, as the cover continues around and touches the end wall of the plug. It even continues from there and cuts under the outside edge of the plug.

This construction, therefore, lacks the spacing specifically called for in the present claims. The cover therefore does not have the spaced apart surface called for in the claims of the present invention. Moreover, the claims of the present invention call for a valve cover which is of reduced diameter relative to the end face portion of the plug. On the other hand, the

vent plug 22 of the reference is completely covered by the cover 50 in all embodiments.

Thus, the end face of the plug 22 in Slesinski cannot readily be cleaned, since it is totally covered by the shroud 50. On the other hand, the entire end face surface 18, as well as the interior of the shroud, may be cleaned by water rushing through the passage 30 of the shroud. The shroud 22 is spaced apart from the axially outer surface portions of the plug, and this space allows water to penetrate the passage, but only at a low angle. When the water spray is directed more toward the outer surface of the shroud, the shroud protects the valve from being struck by water. However, because the shroud is fixed in place, the entire exterior surface of the hub cap may be readily washed with a high pressure washer. The Slesinski reference only shows the type of protection of the valve, which incidentally is of a different type than the valve of the present invention, by surrounding the entire elastomeric plug with a cover 50.

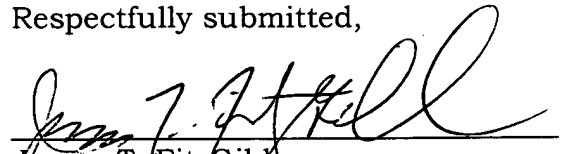
Still further, the venting in the Slesinski patent must go through the labyrinth provided by the plug cover 50 in order to be vented to the atmosphere. In the present invention, the cavity is vented simply by discharging the pressure directly to the atmosphere. The shroud or plug cover 20 does not add to the force required to vent the cavity.

Regarding the Denton Patent No. 5,505,525, this is similar only in that the venting valve for the plug may be made of similar material.

However, this patent shows no cover or shroud at all, let alone a shroud having the features claimed in the present application.

Accordingly, it is believed that the present invention defines over the references, including those cited, and an early Notice of Allowance is, therefore, respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "James T. FitzGibbon", written over a horizontal line.

James T. FitzGibbon
Reg. No. 20,592

Dated: February 11, 2005 _____

Vedder Price Kaufman & Kammholz
222 N. LaSalle Street
Chicago IL 60601
(312) 609 7850